



Embassy of the United States of America

AFRICAN-AMERICAN LEADERS

Catherine L. Hughes, Media Leader



Catherine L. Hughes with actor Will Smith © AP Images

Financial difficulties forced Catherine L. Hughes to give up her home and live with her young son in the studio of the first radio station she bought in Washington. Today Radio One, the company she founded in 1980, is a multibillion-dollar

enterprise composed of 55 broadcast stations in 16 urban U.S. markets. Reaching an estimated 14 million listeners each week, it is the largest African American-owned broadcasting company in the United States. When Radio One became a publicly traded

company on the NASDAQ stock exchange in 1999, it was the first owned by an African-American woman. In January 2004, Radio One launched TV One, a national cable and satellite television network featuring programming for African-American adults.



Media entrepreneur Cathy Hughes talks with actor Denzel Washington on a 2007 TV One program. © AP Images

In an interview with Hello Beautiful, a website aimed at African-American women, Hughes said of Radio One and TV One programming, “We’re interested in the positive side of being African American.” Hughes’ commitment

to the African-American community, and to African-American women in particular, runs deep. Most of the employees in her business are African Americans, and many of the managers are African-American women. Both Hughes

and her son, Alfred Liggins, have been named Entrepreneur of the Year by Ernst & Young, one of the largest accounting firms in the world. She was born in Omaha, Nebraska, in 1947.